

Dreams and Visions



3 Components of a Prophetic Word

1. Revelation
2. Interpretation
3. Application and Timing

Did you know that more than 30 percent of the Bible is compiled from dreams and visions? From Genesis to Revelation, God revealed His plans for His children through various dreams and visions. God still speaks to us today, if we but listen.

Genesis records God calling Joseph to ministry at age 17 through two back-to-back dreams (Genesis 37:4-9). God later used him to interpret Pharaoh's dreams of Egypt's coming famine (Genesis 41:1-36). Pharaoh then promoted Joseph from the prison house to the palace and made him prime minister over all the land at age 30. God used Joseph to deliver an entire nation (plus his own family) from a seven-year famine through accurate acknowledgement, interpretation, and application of two dreams God gave to a heathen king!

Does God still speak this way today? Let's look at the Scriptures and some contemporary examples. "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3:6, KJV). "What has been before will be again...there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9, NIV). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8, KJV).

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." (Acts 2:17, NIV).

The Bible clearly tells us that God speaks through the language of dreams and visions today. Scripture is full of examples. Church history records numerous examples. Many men and women of God altered history by obeying the dreams and visions He gave them. They include missionaries like Dr. Livingstone who

carried the Gospel to an unevangelized land, Corrie Ten Boom who saved the lives of many Jews by hiding them in her home during the Holocaust. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who "had a dream" that changed a nation. If God still speaks in dreams and visions today, why are we not experiencing them? Scripture provides the answer. "Although God speaks again and again, no one pays attention to what he says. At night when people are asleep, God speaks in dreams and visions..." (Job 33:14-15 TEV).

Another translation renders it this way, "For God does speak—now one way, now another—though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds...God does all these things to a man twice, even three times—to turn his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him" (Job 33:14-15,29 NIV). The question then is not "if" God is speaking this way today, but "are we listening" when he does speak through the language of dreams and visions of the night. "...for not everyone has faith" (2Thessalonians. 3:2, NIV). "You can never please God without faith, without depending on him. Anyone who wants to come to God must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely look for him" (Hebrews 11:6, LVB). "For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it." (Hebrews 4:2, NKJV).

GOD'S WILL IS THAT YOU BE ABLE TO INTERPRET WHAT HE GIVES

People often wonder why God speaks in dreams, visions and symbolic ways. Why doesn't He just speak "audibly" all the time or Jesus appear and give us our "marching orders" each morning? The answer to this may be because God desires to "fellowship with us." He met with Adam in the "cool of the day" in the garden of Eden before the fall (see Genesis 3:8) (KJV). But after Adam and Eve had sinned, the Bible indicates that "they hid from God" (vs .8). Often, we are still afraid of God due to our sinful nature. So God graces us with a "dream or vision", to draw us into His presence for fellowship and "interpretation" of what he has spoken through this wonderful language of the Spirit. By doing so, it causes us to "seek him" afresh.

The Song of Solomon records these words:

"**Draw me**, we will run after thee: The King hath brought me into his chambers..." (Song of Solomon 1:4).

If God doesn't "draw us," we don't have it in ourselves to "run after him." It's just not in our nature. "No man can come unless the Father draws him" (John 6:44). God often "speaks to us" through "dreams and visions" in this "symbolic" or "allegorical" language. When we awake, we "run after him" by opening our Bibles and seeking the Holy Spirit for "interpretation " of what we have "seen."

WRITE THE DREAM OR VISION DOWN ON PAPER

This is the primary tool in beginning to properly interpret what God speaks in the night through dreams or visions. Simply keep a pen and paper next to your bed, and if you receive a dream or vision, get up and write it down. If you don't, you will often lose it and not remember the dream until after it comes to pass. The French refer to this phenomenon as *Déjà vu*, a term describing the feeling that one has lived through the present situation before. The phrase translates literally as "already seen". Or, the experience of experiencing something we've experienced before. I think many times God shows us something in a dream or vision of the night, and when we wake up, we don't always press into God for interpretation and application on what He's graciously shown us, but rather fall back to sleep. This is one reason I believe that God told Habakkuk "write the vision down! "

"And the Lord answered me, and said, **Write the vision**, make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Habakkuk 2:2-3) (KJV).

When we get up and take time to write the vision down, God often shows us more, and more and more.

Daniel wrote his visions from the Lord down and was later positioned to share these visions with the person in authority over the nation. Daniel was then promoted to a position of great political influence and authority in Babylon while in captivity.

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head *while* on his bed. **Then he wrote down the dream**, telling the main facts. Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. (Daniel 7:1-2) (NKJV).

Daniel "wrote down the main facts" from the dream and visions of his head. The next day he was able to look at this chronicling of the main facts and pray for interpretation and application of what to do with this revelation from God. Romans 15:4 NKJV says,

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

We can learn from God's command to Habakkuk to write the vision, and Daniels action to write the dream, and who knows what God will do with, to and through us next. This one act of obedience to wake up and write down the main facts of our dreams, could position us for greater and greater things with God.

INTERPRETATION AND CLARITY IS OFTEN GIVEN WHEN WE WRITE

Often, "as we begin to write," the **interpretation** and **clarity** of the dream or vision is given to us by the Spirit. This is God's nature to do something in response to our "action!" Faith is an action. Show me your faith by what you do, for "faith without works is dead" (James 2:17-18). As we "step out" by faith and begin to write the vision or dream down, God begins to respond by giving us interpretation in like manner. "Draw close to God and he will draw closer to you" (James 4:8). Not only will God often give us "interpretation" and "clarity" when we are obedient to "write the vision," but He sometimes even begins speaking to us beyond what he has already shown us. For example, he may begin speaking to us for people who were not shown in the dream or vision but is applicable also for them. Or, He may speak to us of something totally unrelated about our own lives once he has our undivided attention and we are "in the Spirit," so to speak.

As you "step out" in obedience to the Word of God in the area of writing the dream or vision, God will do amazing things. But you'll have to put off the carnal nature which just wants to "go back to sleep." This requires some discipline at first, but, once you get the hang of it, you may find God speaking to you through this vehicle more and more often.

Remember, God desires to communicate with you. And He is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34) (KJV). Put a pen and paper by your bed tonight and keep it there until He speaks to you in this way!

3 COMPONENTS TO PROPERLY ADMINISTERING A PROPHETIC WORD

Understanding the three components of a prophetic word will change your effectiveness in the prophetic. I first learned these from a friend and then discovered many other prophetic people teach these three components when helping equip others to operate in their prophetic gifts.

Each prophetic word is basically comprised of three parts, or components. These components are: the **revelation**, the **interpretation**, and the **application**. A breakdown or failure in any of these components can destroy the prophetic word or make useless its effectiveness. Just as a radio receiver has several components that work together to receive a signal, process the message, and project the words to the listener, so it is with a prophetic word. A breakdown in any of these necessary components can result in a "distorted message" (with a lot of "static") at best, or a message that becomes "false" at worst. Each of these **three components** (revelation, interpretation and application) is often a distinct ingredient, but they blend together to comprise a prophetic word. Let's take a look at them.

- 1) **Revelation** --The first part (or component) of a prophetic word is the **information** that we receive from God. This is the information that God gives us without us having any prior natural knowledge or understanding. Revelation is basically knowledge or information that we could not have known unless God revealed it to us. Revelation comes in varied forms and on different levels. (To learn more about the various ways God speaks I

recommend reading, Hearing God 25 Different Ways, available on Amazon).

Revelation can come as a dream, a vision, a word or song in the night, an impression, a sudden knowing, the still small voice, a perceiving, etc. It is basically the "what did you see, hear or receive?" portion of a prophetic word. This component, without its correspondent, which we call interpretation, provides us very little value while standing alone. But when God gives us the interpretation, it instantly becomes of value.

- 2) **Interpretation**--The second part (or component) of a prophetic word is the **interpretation**. This is the understanding and meaning the Holy Spirit illuminates from the revelation we have received. Interpretation is the "what is God saying?" or "what does this mean?" portion of prophecy.
- 3) **Application** -- The third part (or component) of a prophetic word is the **application**. This is the "understanding" of how we implement or utilize the revelation and interpretation that we received. Application is the "what do we do with this?" portion of prophecy. Many times, the application is not our job. This is important. God often brings the receiver into deeper relationship with Himself at this stage. This occurs when God requires the receiver to determine what he or she is supposed to do as a result of the prophetic word. We are all responsible to hear from God ourselves. Prophetic words either move us toward the Lord to see if this is so, or confirm He's already spoken to us to move us into action.